

<sup>AP. 3.</sup>  
The best Portion.

BEING A  
SERMON

Preached at the Funeral of

Mrs. Mary Steed,

In the City of Exon, November 16th, 1699

Wherein these Three Points are briefly Handled.

- I. That those who have God for their Portion, may in this Life be exercised under great Afflictions.
- II. That the Interest of a Believer in God, as his Portion, is not at all weakened by the greatest Affliction.
- III. That God only is a Soul-satisfying Portion to a true Believer, &c.

By T. W. a Lover of Peace and Truth.

Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my Portion, saith my Soul.

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1608/5893



• T O T H E

# Truly Vertuous, and Pious, Mrs. Frances Steed.

**B**Eloved for Jesus sake; I Dedicate this Sermon to you, not to revive your Grief, but to renew your Comfort; Not to make your Wounds (which the Almighty hath given you) to bleed afresh; but to lead you to him, who is your Portion, Light and Life. It was your Request brought me into the Pulpit, and the Consideration of the afflicting Hand of God (which hath in a few Months made many a Breach upon you; first, in taking to himself your dear Husband, and your only Son, and now your Vertuous and Obedient Daughter) engag'd my Thoughts on the following Subject. And now your Request, with many others of my Christian Friends (both known and unknown) hath led me to the Press. It was the Comfort that you and others had from God, in hearing this Discourse, that prevailed with me for its Publication, not any Opinion or Conceit of it in my self. I know not whether it be my Unhappiness,

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happiness, that I cannot please my self, in any thing I do for Jesus Christ, yet am not without hopes, that God accepts of my sincere, tho' mean Endeavours, for his Glory, and the good of Souls, my whole design (as far as I know my own heart) is to promote Charity, Truth and Peace, amongst all, with whom I am Concern'd. As knowing, the Glory and Power of the Christian Religion is wrapt up in those things: and that Strife, uncharitable Contentions, Pride and Self-seeking, are Diametrically opposite thereto, I have endeavour'd, with as little Variation as might be, to send the same to the Press, that was delivered in your bearing; only here and there you have some small Enlargements, which time would not allow me to make, when this Discourse was spoken; Mr. Kitterel's Notes have been some help to me, especially in the Enlargements. My earnest desire is, That as God gave you Comfort, in a time of need, in bearing the Truths herein contained, so you and others may have much more in reading the same, and that God might graciously sanctify all your Afflictions, and make up your repeated Losses in the abundant Enjoyment of himself; which is the humble Prayer of,

Your Servant,

For Jesus Sake,

*Tho. Whinnell.*

## P S A L. lxxiii. 26.

*My Fleſh and my Heart faileth; but God is the  
ſtrength of my Heart, and my Portion for  
ever.*

**T**H.O' there can be no certain Judgment made, of the eternal States of Men or Women, by any external Providence of God towards them; either during the time of Life, or from the time and manner of their Death; *For all things come alike to all; there's one event to the righteous, and to the wicked, to the good, and to the clean, and to the unclean, and no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them,* Ecclef. 9. 1, 2. Yet good Men have been stumbled, whilst they have beheld the Prosperity of the Wicked, in their Life, and that no remarkable Evil hath befall'n them at their Death. When many that truly fear God, have been greatly afflicted whilst they live, and under great Trouble and Sorrow when they die. Wicked Men from hence, have hardened themselves in their Sins, Ecclef. 8. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* They have presumed upon the goodness of their condition, by reason of the smiling Providences of God towards them; thus it was with those the Psalmist speaks of in the 3. 4, 5, and 6th Verses.

In this *Psalm*, you have an account of a great and fore Temptation, which this holy Man *Asaph* lay under for some time; occasioned by the Observation he had made

made of the Prosperity of the Wicked, and Adversity of the Righteous. From Verse 2d, to the 12th, and from the 12th to the 16th, he declares the diffident Unbelieving, and carnal Reasonings of <sup>his</sup> Heart, whilst he lay under the Power of this Temptation; being ready to conclude, that all his care and diligence in living a holy and virtuous Life were in vain. Verse 13th, *Verily, I have cleansed my heart in vain, &c. for all the day long, I have been plagued and chastened every morning*, Verse 14th. And from Verse 16th to the 21st, he manifests the way and means, how he was delivered from this Temptation. First Negatively: Not by his own Reasoning, Strength, or Skill; for (saith he, Verse 16th) *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me*. Secondly Affirmatively: By consulting Sanctuary Counsels; *Then understood he their end: and saw, how little cause he had to envy them a short-liv'd Prosperity, who for their evil Deeds, should soon be doom'd to an eternal Misery*. Thus being instructed into that most glorious Truth, of a future Retribution, declares what the end of these ungodly Wretches is like to be, Verse 18th and 19th, *Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment? they are utterly consumed with terrors*. And in Verse 21st and 22d, he laments and bewails his own Foolishness and Brutishness; *Thus my heart was grieved, and I was pricked in my reins; so foolish was I, and ignorant, I was even as a beast before thee*. And in Verse the 23d, he ascribes the Glory of his Preservation to the Lord; *Nevertheless, I am continually with thee, thou hast holden me by my right hand*. And lastly, being shaken by the Wind of this Temptation, he takes

takes the advantage to lay the faster hold on his God ; and proceeds to a higher Profession of his Faith, Hope, and Confidence in God ; entirely giving up himself to the Conduct of his Counsel, Verse 24th, *in hope of his glory*. And declareth his high Estimation of God, and his ardent Desires for him, Verse 25th. And in our Text, confesseth, that *God is the strength of his Heart, and his Portion for ever*. Thus much for the Parts of this *Psal*m.

In the Text you have two Parts.

(1.) An humble Confession of human Frailty ;  
*My flesh and my heart faileth.*

(2.) A sincere Profession of his Faith, Hope, and Confidence in God ; But *God is the strength of my heart, and my Portion for ever.*

*Ainsworth*, according to the Hebrew, reads the Text thus ; *Wholly consumed is my flesh, and my heart ; the rock of my heart, and my portion is God for ever.*

There are several Glosses upon the Text, which I shall only mention.

Some thus : ‘ All the Reasonings of my Flesh, and my Heart, about the Dispen’sations of God, do fail me, to find out the true Cause and Reason, why God doth suffer the Wicked to prosper in this World ; and to let them (many times) go quietly out of it, without any Remarks of his Displeasure upon them ; whilst the Godly are in Trouble, and exercised with many Plagues and Afflictions in their Life, and attended with Doubts and Distresses when they die. ‘ I am

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‘ I am not able, by all the strength of natural Reasoning, to extricate my self out of this Temptation ; but the Rock of my Heart, *i. e.* He that supports my Soul , resolves my Doubts, quiets my Mind, and gives rest to my troubled Heart, is God, who is my Portion for ever ; in the enjoyment of whom my Soul is satisfied ; and that not only for a little time, but for ever : I am content with him for my Lot and Portion, and nothing else in Heaven or Earth, will, or can, satiate the desire of my longing Soul.

*Beneficiarius.*  
*Si consum-*  
*matuerit Ge-*  
*rus.*

Others thus : ‘ Altho’ my Heart or my Flesh fail ; or, if my Heart and my Flesh were consumed , yet God is the Rock of my Heart, and my everlasting Portion. And if so read, the Sense seems to be this, (*viz.*) If I were, or, altho’ I may be (with respect to my Flesh and Heart) wholly consumed, tho’ my Strength, Health, and Life in this World were ended, and the comforts of Creatures wholly taken from me ; yet my Soul hath its Refuge in God, he is the strength of my Heart : I have enough in him to satisfy all my desires. I might, by Afflictions, be deprived of all earthly Enjoyments, yet I shall not be strip’d of my chiefest Treasure ; God is my Portion for ever.

*De tui des-*  
*irio.*

‘ My Heart and my Flesh fail (*i. e.*) saith another, through the desire of thee. And if so understood, it is as much as if he should have said, My Flesh and my Heart do even pine and consume away, through my Soul’s longing desire after thee : as *Psal.* 84. 3. and 119. 81. And so it is expressive of that ardent Love, and vehement Desire of his Soul, after greater Enjoyments



joyments of God; and agrees with what he expresseth in the Verses before our Text; *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth I desire besides thee.*

But not to stand longer on the niceties of the Text; the Sense, I humbly conceive, is this, Altho' my Flesh and my Heart fail, tho' I may be consumed through Misery and Affliction (whilst the Wicked prosper) yet, nevertheless I will constantly love thee, and put my trust in thee, as my sure Rock, and everlasting Portion. And is as much as if he should have said, I have gotten this Advantage, by being delivered out of this Temptation; That whatsoever Straits, Troubles, and Afflictions, may press distress, and grieve my Body, or Mind; However the Lord dispose of my outward State, tho' my Strength, Peace and Life it self, be taken away; yet I am resolved to depend on God, to trust in him, for he is my Rock and Portion for ever. We have done with opening the Text.

There is one Proposition I shall speak to from the Words, (*viz.*)

*That however distressed a true Believer may be, either in Life or Death; yet it's enough to comfort and support his Soul, that God is the Rock of his Heart, and everlasting Portion.*

Doct.

For the clearing and confirmation of this great Truth, I shall confine my self to three general Heads.

B

I. The



I. The first general Head is this; That those who have God for their Portion, may in Life and Death, be exercised under great and grievous Afflictions.

(1.) From the Testimony of the holy Scriptures, this Truth appears. That thus it hath been, is, and shall be, *Acts 14. 22. We must through many tribulations, enter into the kingdom of God.* And our Lord acquaints his Disciples, *John 16. 33. That in the world they shall have tribulation.* And saith the Psalmist, *Mary are the afflictions of the righteous, Psal. 34. 19.* In this Life the People of God receive their evil things, this is not the place of their rest; *For if in this life only believers had hope, they were of all men most miserable, 1 Cor. 15. 19.* This Life is the time of their Warfare; they must endure hardship, as good Soldiers of Jesus Christ: they that would live in the fruition of the ever blessed God hereafter, must be content to deny themselves here; and be willing to bear the Cross, if they intend to wear the Crown; and bear about in their Bodies, the Marks of a crucified Jesus: the Lord Christ will conform his Members to himself, as well in Sufferings, as in Joys, in Tribles, as in Triumphs.

Think of this, you that are willing to enjoy the Crown, but care not to meddle with the Cross; that would be with Christ on *Mount Sion*, where he's glorified; but will not go with him to *Mount Calvary*, where he's crucified: that would (with *Balaam*) die the death of the Righteous, but not live their life; that spend your Days in sinful Pleasures here, and will not forsake them for the pure Beatitudes of an endless Life hereafter.

But

But (2.) God doth, in love and faithfulness to his own Children, exercise them under manifold Trials and Afflictions in this life ; he shews his paternal Love in chastising them for their Profit, *Heb. 12. 10.* He sees they have need of Affliction, to wean their Hearts from this World, to manifest to them, the vanity and emptiness of Creatures, to unclog their minds from Earth ; that with the greater freedom, their Souls may take flight on the Wing of Faith and Love, to contemplate the pure Felicities that are above. He hath said the Idols shall be utterly abolished, *Isai. 2. 18.* and by Affliction he takes those Idols out of their hands which steal away their hearts from him ; and makes them willing to leave a sinful World, to enjoy the sweet Embraces of his everlasting Mercy : and as often as need requires, they are in Heaven, through manifold Temptations, *1 Pet. 1. 6.* He by Affliction tries their Graces, and puts their Faith upon a more strong and vigorous Exercise ; whoever goes uncorrected, God will not bastardize his own Children by leaving them without Chastisement, *Heb. 12. 8.* he deals with them, as with the legitimate Off-spring of Heaven, and makes good his Covenant to them ; his love to their everlasting welfare, will not leave them to themselves, as a Child that brings the Parent to shame, *Prov. 29. 15.* his Holiness will not suffer Sin to go unpunished in his dearest Off-spring, *Amos 3. 2.* his Goodness will not see them sustain any Injury, by the sharpest Affliction ; his Truth and Faithfulness will not leave them without Grace, Strength, and Support, to help them in all their times of need, *Deut. 33. 25.* and his Power will not rest, until it hath brought good to their Souls,

Souls, by all their Afflictions, *Rom.* 8. 28. turned their loss into gain, their sorrow into joy ; and thro' the dark passages of Death, brought them to the glorious light of an endless Life: and if so, then those that have God for their Portion, may in this Life, be exercised under great and grievous Afflictions.

V S E I.

This may serve for a Use of Caution to us all. Not to think the worse of the state and condition of any of them who fear God, because of any great Affliction that befalls them, either in Life or Death : for a Man may be afflicted in Love, *Rev.* 3. 19. whilst others are let alone in Judgment. The things of this life may be denied to some in mercy, whilst they are granted to others as a curse, *Psal.* 69. 22. *Job's* friends erred in Judgment on this very account ; They concluded, that he who was grievously afflicted must needs be an Hypocrite : and because *Job* was so afflicted, they were not afraid to draw up their false Indictment against him, and drop their hard Censures, to the grief of his holy Soul. Therefore make no judgment of your Estate for Heaven, by any thing you have, or are denied of Earth ; but prove your Title to Heaven, by the truth of your Regeneration and Conversion ; your intrest in Christ, by the sincerity of your Faith ; the truth of your Love, by the unfeignedness of your Obedience ; and that God is your Portion, by your Soul's hearty chusing of him, constant dependance on him, and sincere resignation to him.

*Job.* 3. 3.

3. 16.

14. 23.

*Lam.* 3. 24.

II. The

II. The second general Head for the clearing of this Doctrine, is this, (*viz.*) *That the intrest of a believer in God, as his portion, is not at all weakened by the greatest affliction.*

Affliction may and doth try the Faith of a Believer ; but never destroys it in a Child of God. And as a strong Wind shakes the Roots of young and thriving Trees, and opens the Earth about them, to give them the advantage of taking the deeper and faster Root ; so Affliction and Temptation may shake a Believer, humble his Heart, and make him take the faster hold of Christ ; and make him grow downward in humility and self-abasement ; and upward in love, trust, and dependance on his God : or it may, as the Frost in the Winter, kill the Weeds of Sin, which naturally sprout up in them ; but the good Seed of Grace takes the advantage to grow up with the less interruption. God loves his Children nevertheless, tho' he make them even black with smiting them, *Job* 30. 30. 'tis his love to their Souls, that engageth him to afflict their Bodies ; and 'tis his desire of receiving them to the comfortable Embraces of his glorious Arms, that makes him hurry them out of a sinful World in haste, *Isai.* 57. 1, 2. And which way soever he takes to translate his Children from Earth to Heaven, he is faithful and able to make all things to work together for their good, *Rom.* 8. 28. Tho' some are carried (as it were) to Heaven in a fiery Chariot, as *Elijah*, *2 Kings* 2. 11. and others, with old *Jacob*, gather up themselves in their Beds and give up the Ghost, *Gen.* 42. 33. Some come to the Harbor of Heaven with their Sails fully spread ; and with good

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good old Simeon say, *Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy Salvation, I. u.*  
 2. 29. whilst others, like weather-beaten Vessels, come to the Harbor with their Sails rent and torn; and from a holy Fear, kindled by the Flames of a jealous Love, are ready to cry out with their dearest Lord, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Mat. 27. 46. But however it be, there is reason to say to the Righteous, it shall be well with them; but woe to the Wicked, it shall be ill with them; how-  
 ever they live in pleasure, and die secure, their end is, and shall be, miserable, *Isai. 3. 10.* In some, the actions of their rational Soul continue in their strength and vigor, until their Breath is just expiring; in others, the actions of the rational Soul (by violent Distempers) cease, and then their Actions cease to be morally good or evil: For tho' neither their Persons nor Actions cease to be under the government of God, as all things are, yet they wanting a capacity for moral Obedience (which can't be performed without Understanding and Will) the Morality of their Actions must by just consequence cease at that time; and are in that respect, no more to be accounted of, than the Actions of a meer Animal void of Reason; and there is nothing of moral goodness or badness in them. But which way soever God takes, either in their Life or Death, his Wisdom will order it for their good; God loves his Children as much when his Hand is heavy on them, as when he dandles them upon the Knee of his smiling Providences; he hath chosen his People in the Furnace of affliction, *Isai. 48. 10. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of all his Saints, Psal. 116. 15.* And if so, then the intrest of a believer in God,

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11

God, as his Portion, is not at all weakened by the greatest Affliction.

But zdly, Afflictions do not drive a Believer from God, but brings him nearer to God ; Psal. 119. 71. *It was good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes.* Oh ! how many can speak the same Language by sweet experience ? There's not a Saint in Heaven (that hath had time on Earth to pass through Trouble and Affliction) but is praising God for the peaceable Fruit of Righteousness gained thereby The Winds and Storms of Affliction, that usually blow down the rotten and unstable Professors, makes the sincere Believer look the more green and flourishing. Afflictions are the means which God useth to quicken us to our Duty, to call us back to himself, when we go astray from him ; Psal. 119. 67. *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept thy word* They are God's great Ordinance to bring his People nearer to himself, to put them upon Prayer ; Psal. 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble.* Had it not been for Afflictions, Prayer might have been at an end with some of us : But Oh ! how good is God, when by them he takes away our Tin and Dross ? Isai. 27. 9. *By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* In short, as no Affliction can weaken God's love to his Children, so it cannot, it shall not, move them from their love to him ; Rom. 8. 35. to the 39th, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, &c. Nay, in all these things Believers are more than Conquerors, through him that loved them.* We are apt to dread Afflictions, not only because of the smart of them (which makes Nature shrink)



shrink) but because we are insensible of God's gracious end in them. But how gracious is God to every Believer? Who, tho' he visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquities with Stripes, Psal. 90. 33. *Nevertheless his loving kindness will be not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail;* but will at last crown all their Afflictions with the peaceable fruits of Righteousness: And if so, then the Intrest of a Believer in God, as his Portion, is not at all weakened by the greatest Affliction.

(3.) Affliction hath, and doth, make the People of God more ardently to love him, and more earnestly desire the full enjoyment of him. God by Affliction makes the Creature bitter and himself sweet; the more bitterness he puts in the Creature, the more sweetness do gracious Souls find in himself: the less they have of Creature-enjoyments to trust in, the more they put their trust in God; the more weary they are of this World, the more they long to be in the full enjoyment of God; an Intrest in Heaven hath been so much the more desirable to them, as they have been strip'd of earthly Comforts; they have tasted the sweets of Communion with God, with the greater delight, and the Eye of their Souls have been more strongly fix'd upon Heaven, as their way in this World hath been hedg'd up with Thorns; the more troublesome the World hath been to them, the greater delight they have taken in the contemplation of that rest which remains for the People of God. Doth not your experience tell you so Christians? When God by Affliction makes the things of this World bitter to you, how doth the Soul with the greater



greater freedom clap about him, and with more *entireness* give up it self to the Lord? *Plal. 73. 24. Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, &c.* When was this resignation of himself to God, but after he had understood God's gracious end in the Afflictions of his People, and had a prospect of a future retribution, then his Soul ascends on the wing of holy desires to God? *Verse 25. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee.* Now if you put these things together, you may see this Truth fully confirmed; That the Intrest of a Believer in God, as his Portion, is not weakened by the greatest Affliction.

*Use 1.* From hence we should learn, not so much to fear Suffering, as Sin. Let us make *Moses's* choice, *Heb. 11. 25.* rather to suffer Affliction with the People of God, than to enjoy the Pleasures of Sin, that are but for a season. Sin always doth us hurt, but Affliction never does a Child of God any injury; But how many are there, who are not afraid to Sin, that fear the Cross?

Tho' it be an undoubted truth, that all Sorrows, Afflictions, and Deaths in the World, are the fruit and effect of Sin; and that the first Sin of the human Nature, brought Wrath, and a Curse, upon the Inhabitants of this lower World. Yet how easily are we drawn to Sin? How hardly perswaded to Repent? tho' the Groans and Sighs of the whole Creation calls us thereto. But if Sin be pardoned (as it is to every sincere Believer) the Sting of all Afflictions is removed, and they need not fear them.

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2. From hence we should learn, to chuse rather to have Affliction sanctified than removed. An Affliction sanctified, is by the Grace and Mercy of God, ordered as a means to work out our good and salvation; when an Affliction removed, may be an occasion to harden our Hearts, as it did *Pharaoh's*. But how impatient are we to have them removed? and how little concern'd to have our Souls better'd by them? But doth this favor of a christian Spirit? alas! 'tis far from it. He that is willing to have Affliction sanctified, makes a better choice, than he that would have it removed. It is the Language of a gracious Heart, *Lord do by me even as thou wilt, so my soul may be brought nearer to thee thereby.*

3. Be not solicitous how or when you shall die, but careful how you may live to please God. Let your Life be pleasing to God, and be sure Death will be your gain; *Phil. 1. 21.* Let us mind to honor God whilst we live, and leave him to dispose of us when we die; let us not be so desirous to live a long Life, as industrious to live an holy Life.

4. Learn from hence, to think well of God under all afflictive Dispensations; and take care of entertaining hard Thoughts of him. With *Job*, bless him as well when he is taking from you, as when he is giving to you. God hath a right to you, and all you have; when he takes away the desire of your Eyes, and the joy of your Hearts, doth he take any more than his own? What reason then have Creatures to complain? If we did but duly consider, that

that by Sin we have forfeited our Right to every good thing ; and that all we enjoy on this side Hell, is from free Mercy : we should bear our Afflictions with greater patience and with the Church, *Micb. 7. 9.* remember that we have sinned against him ; and say with the Prophet, *Lam. 3. 22. It is of the Lord's mercy that we are not consumed.* But to conclude this Head ; Let no Affliction make you call in question God's Love to you, that fear his Name ; but put you upon the search of your own hearts and ways, *Lam. 3. 40.* and say with holy *Job, Tho' he slay me, yet will I put my trust in him, Job 13. 15.* Think not the worse of the ways of God, because Afflictions do attend them ; nor the better of the ways of Sin, because some Men meet with worldly Prosperity in them : but think well of God and his ways under all his Dispensations, and be content that he should have the dispose of you and yours ; he's faithful who hath promised that all things shall work together for good, to them that love him.

III. The third and last general Head is this (*viz.*) That God only is a Soul-satisfying Portion to true Believers, both in Life and Death, and for ever ; *The rock of my heart, and my portion for ever,* saith our Text. The great God hath by a most free and gracious grant, made over himself to true Believers, in an everlasting Covenant, to be their God, their Portion, and Inheritance for ever, *Jer. 31. 33. I will be their God, Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him ; and Psal. 16. 5. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.* The Father of Mercies bestows upon his Children the best of Portions,

tions, he gives like himself ; and because there is nothing better than himself, he hath not denied to give himself to his People, for their God and eternal Portion. Now this is more than if he had given them all the World ; yea, more than if he had said, *I will give you all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them* (as the Devil falsely promised our Lord Jesus). For if all the Riches, Honors, Pleasures, and Treasures of this World, could be gathered together, and any one Soul of you could say, all this is mine ; and that Man were assured of ten thousand Years to live in health and ease to enjoy them, yet this Gift of God himself, is infinitely more than all this : wicked Men have their portion in this Life, *Psalm. 17. 14.* but Believers have theirs in God. Now that God only is a Soul-satisfying Portion, be pleased to consider,

(1.) That all other Portions perish with the using. Whatever Men have of the things of this World, they are all perishing Vanities, corruptible Things, uncertain Riches, that a Man may have to day, and be strip'd of tomorrow ; *1 Cor. 7. 29. But this I say brethren, the time is short. It remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; for the fashion of this world passeth away.* It is but a little time, when all those things we set our foolish hearts upon, will be no more to us than the dust under our Feet. When sickness comes, it spoils the sweetness and pleasure of all earthly Enjoyments ; and the cold dividing Hand of Death, doth at one Stroke, put an irrecoverable di-

distance between us, and all those splendid Atoms, and goodly Nothings, that many ruine their Souls to get and keep. But God is an everlasting, never-fading Portion; and because he is so, our Savior adviseth to get a Treasure in Heaven, Luke 12. 33. *Sell that ye have, and give alms: provide your selves bags which waxe not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.*

(2.) A true Believer cannot satisfy himself without the enjoyment of God, in any other thing; he is not content with the World, nor any thing in it, if he doth not enjoy Communion with his God. I appeal to your experiences, Christians, and come to the Bar of your Consciences; let me ask you, What is that doth satisfy your Souls? Can Riches do it? Can Possessions or Relations? Are they not empty and unsatisfying, without you enjoy God in the possession of them? Are you not uneasy in every place and state, without some well-grounded hope, that the Lord is your God? I am satisfied, that a Soul who hath tasted that the Lord is gracious, cannot be content without a Christ; Psal. 142. 5. *I cried unto thee, O Lord, I said, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living; he can say, Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on the earth I desire besides thee,* Verse 2 5. his Soul is longing after God, as the Hart panteth after the Water-brooks, Psal. 42. 1, 2, 3. and when deprived of his Ordinances, (those means of Communion with God) cries out, *When shall I come and appear before God?* His Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; his Heart and Flesh crieth out for the living God, Psal. 84.

84. 2. What can satisfy the Soul, that hath a principle of divine Life in him, short of the heavenly *Manna*? Hence it is, that when a Believer goes to the Throne of Grace, falls down on his knees, if God hides his face from him, he comes away ashamed and confounded, like the Children of the Nobles, Jer. 14. 3. *When sent to the waters, they came to pits, and found no water, they returned with their vessels empty, they were ashamed, and confounded, and covered their heads.* So it is with a Believer, when he comes to God, to wait on him in his Ordinances, if he doth not find the Lord in them.

It is a most certain Truth, that there is nothing in the World can give satisfaction to the Soul of any Man; the Earth with all its fulness, cannot reach the Soul's wants, nor satisfy its vast desires: the rest, centre, and happiness of the Soul, is God alone. But here lies the difference, carnal Hearts would fain fill their Bellies with it, & are still seeking for contentment in the fruition of Creatures; and their deceitful Hearts perfwades them, that there is something in the World, could they come at it, would make them happy Creatures, and give them rest and satisfaction; could they attain their desires, to have so much by the Year, and to live in pleasure, free from the ill conveniences they labor under: but all this is a lying Vanity, for if they have their desire, their thirst after more is not quenched, but inflamed, and they still as unsatisfied as before. *Solomon* would save the Men of the World a great deal of Labor, if they would believe him, when he acquaints us (after the greatest search that ever was made, to find out the sweetness and excel-



excellency of Creature-enjoyments) *That all is vanity and vexation of spirit*, Ecclef. 1. 2. But Men will not believe him, nor be fully perswaded of this Truth; they will not entertain it in their Hearts, though they carry a Notion of it in their Heads. Sin deceives the Soul, and an evil Heart eagerly pursues sensual Enjoyments: but now a gracious Soul, as he knows his happiness is not in the fruition of any sublunary Enjoyments, so he doth not seek it in them, but calls off his Heart from the pursuit of these things, that it may rest in God alone; *Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee*, Plal. 116. 7.

(3.) A true Believer can be content with the enjoyment of God, tho' he be denied other things; Oh! how sweet is it to a Child of God, when the Light of God's Countenance is lifted upon his Soul? Plal. 63. 3. *Because thy loving kindness is better than life*. Life is the most valuable thing in Nature (the Father of Lyes in this spake a Truth) *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath, will he give for his life*, Job 2. 4. yet a gracious Soul values the enjoyment of God more than Life: a Dinner of Herbs is better with God's presence and favor, than a stalled Ox without him; and Believers prefer the worst of Christ, before the best of the World, *Heb. 11. 26.* and do esteem the lowest place in the House of God, above the highest station in the Tents of Wickedness, *Psal. 84. 10.* How content is a gracious Soul, when God doth feast him with the Bread and Water of Life? when he eats of the hidden *Manna*, and drinks of the Water which springs from the Throne of God; this fills



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2. Again, in death, God is a most desirable Portion. Even when all other things fail us, when Riches fail, Friends fail, and all the World can afford us no relief, Oh ! then to have God to be our Portion, is enough to give the Soul the highest satisfaction ; when we come to look Death in the face, then to be able to say with the Apostle, 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know in whom I have believed* when our Hearts witness for us, that we have resigned up our Souls to the Lord for ever, What quiet of Mind and rest of Conscience will this afford ? What comfort is Faith in a living Redeemer, to a poor dying Believer ? *Job* 19. 25. This is the best Cordial to revive his fainting Spirits, when he can say with holy *Job*, *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* But <sup>my</sup> Horror and Amazement will it be to you, that are impenitent and unbelieving Sinners ? (Tho' you have great Portions in this life) when you come upon a dying Bed, to have all your Sins stare you in the face, when Conscience shall be awaked, and bring to your remembrance your past Follies, and tell you how often you have quenched and resisted the Motions of the blessed Spirit, What a sad condition will your Souls be in ? What will become of you that have not God for your Portion ? when Death comes to arrest you, **Who** will or can relieve you, or keep your Souls out of everlasting Flames ? **When our Breath goeth forth,** and we

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return to our Dust, we shall experimentally know, and set our Seal to this Truth, that they are happy, who have the God of *Jacob* for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God, *Psal.* 146 5.

*Lastly,* VWhen the Souls of Believers ascend to the heavenly Region, unlogg'd of this Houë of Clay, and they begin to espy the glorious Hoasts above, Oh! VWhat ravishing Joys will fill their Souls? VWhen their Angel-Guardians usher them into the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born in Heaven, then shall they with the heavenly Quire, the Spirits of just Men made perfect, sing everlasting *Hallelujah's* unto God, and continually live in the pure Light of an endless Felicity, beholding Christ the Lamb, and be ever with the Lord, *1 Thes.* 4. 17. Where there shall be no more a scratching Bryar, nor a pricking Thorn; where Sin, Sorrow, Pain, and Sighing, shall have no place; then shall they see as they are seen, and know as they are known, *1 Cor.* 13 12. Their Understandings shall rest in the knowledg of the supream Truth, and their Wills be delighted in the fruition of the chiefest Good; and all the Desires of their Souls filled and sated with divine and rational Pleasures for ever. Oh! this is the Mark at which Believers aim, this is the Prize for which they run, this is the Rest they strive to enter into; here's their Portion, here's their eternal Inheritance, Crown, and Kingdom; here's their All, all their Salvation, all their Desire, *2 Sam.* 23. 5. For this they have labored, prayed, watched, waited, and longed to be in his

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Presence, *Where is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for ever more,* Psal. 16. ult. And if so, then is God only a Soul satisfying Portion to true Believers, both in life and death, and for ever. Now put these things together, and you may see our first Proposition cleared and confirmed.

I now proceed, with all convenient Brevity, to apply this Truth.

If this be so, that God is a Soul-satisfying Portion to his People; Then,

### I. Use of Instruction.

(1.) How wonderfully doth God condescend to Men on Earth? If the natural distance, and disproportion, between the Creator, and us Creatures, be such, that it is next to Infinite, and exceeds our most raised Apprehensions, insomuch, that *David, Psal.* 8. 3, 4. considering the Glory of God in his Works of Creation and Providence, breaks forth into an holy Admiration, saying, *What is man that thou art mindful of him? and the Son of man that thou visitest him?* How much more may we admire (when we reflect on the moral distance Sin hath made between God and us fallen Creatures) ~~and~~ that the most High should stoop so low for our Redemption; that God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself, *2 Cor.* 5. 18. That God should set his love on us Enemies, and Rebels against his Crown and Dignity, when there was nothing in us to attract his love, but enough to provoke his loathing;

ing; being as wretched Infants cast out into the open Field in the Day that we were born, to the abhorrence of our Persons; and yet this was the time of love, *Ezek. 16. 5, 6.* When God by Covenant made over himself to *Abraham*, to be his God and Portion. *Gen. 17. 1, 2, 3* *Abraham fell on his face.* Oh! How should we with the most profound Humility debase our selves, and in the highest Strains of Thankfulness, adore and admire this wonderful Grace and Love of God to us. Well may the Apostle say, *By grace are ye saved*, *Eph. 2. 8.* for if you, or I, or any of us, are brought to Heaven, and delivered from Hell, which we have deserved, it is Grace, Grace, felt moving Love in God, to make over himself to us, as our Portion.

2. This sheweth the great difference between the Righteous and the Wicked. Do you see a wicked Man, in the enjoyment of all the World can afford? Alas! he's a poor miserable wretch in the midst of all his Enjoyments; you have no cause at all to envy him, his appearing Happiness is but like a Dream, which when a man awaketh, he finds to be nothing but the vagrant wandrings of meer Fancy and Imagination; *Psal. 73. 20.* So, *O Lord when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image.* VVhat advantage had *Dives*, by all his sumptuous Fare, Honor, and Riches, when in Hell he lift up his Eyes, being in Torments? *Luke 16. 23.* *What shall it profit a man* (saith our Lord Jesus) *to gain the whole world, and*

*and to lose his own soul?* Matth. 16. 26. And yet how many poor Creatures do run the hazard of the eternal Damnation of their Souls to gain this VVorld? To gain this VVorld, did I say? Yea, for a Trifle, for Vanity, and that which is worse than Nothing, to gratify a brutal Lust. Do you see the Righteous under Affliction, sitting alone, crying to God for help; of whom it may be said, as the Prophet speaks, Jer. 30. 17. *This is Sion, whom no man regards.* Are they as a Beacon on the top of a Mountain? desolate and forsaken! yet these poor Souls are rich in the midst of all their Poverty. Jam. 2. 5. *Hearken my beloved brethren; Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?* Yea, God doth set a high Value on them; the poorest Believer is more valued by the Lord, than the richest Unbeliever, tho' never so great and exalted in the VVorld.

## II. Use of Examination.

(2.) How should this put us all upon a serious Enquiry into our State and Condition; how it is betwixt God and our Souls? Every one should say with himself, Lord, where is my Portion? Is it in this life? Or is God my Portion?

Now if you would know whether God be your Portion, you need not read over many Volumes, but may find a Resolution to this grand Enquiry, by searching the Records of your own Breasts; I

I mean your own Consciences, if thus examined, will inform you, by answering to these few Questions.

(1.) If God be your Portion, you have chosen him above all things besides. The Prophet could say, Lam. 3. 24. *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.* Now what do your Hearts say to this Question? It may be a little of the VWorld is your Portion, which you have chosen; and if your Hearts and Consciences might speak it out, would they not say to many amongst us, Pleasure is our Portion, that we have chosen, Riches, Honors, Preferments, or it may be, Lust and Sins we have chosen, rather than God; the Lord help you to consider what a sad Choice you have made. But can any of you say, you have chosen the Lord, and do value an Interest in Christ above all the VWorld; blest God for his Goodness, who directed you to make such an happy Choice.

(2.) If God be your Portion, you have the highest Esteem and Valuation for God and Christ; Psal. 73. 25. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the Earth I desire besides thee.* Is Jesus Christ to you precious? 1 Pet. 2. 7. *To you therefore that believe he is precious*; he is the chiefest among ten Thousand, and altogether lovely, Can. 5. ult. If so, then, is God your Portion? But it's to be feared, a great many Persons (if their

their Hearts speak the truth) must needs say the quite contrary; that they see more Beauty in Earth than Heaven; love the Creatures more than God; and see no form or comeliness in Christ and his ways, that they should desire him. The most live, as if they had no relation to God in Heaven, or dependance on Christ; and desire any pleasing perishing Vanity more than God. Oh! wretched deluded Souls, to prefer perishing Vanities, before an Interest in an infinite God.

(3.) Let your Consciences speak for you, Where are your Hearts, Thoughts, and Desires? Are they not after the World, and Lusts thereof? How few are there, that can say, their Hearts are in Heaven? Our dear Lord saith, *Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also*, Luke 12. 34. If you can say your Heart is with God, and Affections set on things above, then bless God for his goodness, and give him the Glory; God is thy Portion. and thou hast a Treasure more valuable than all the World.

(4.) What is it that you trust in, and depend upon? Is God the Rock of your Heart, and Portion that you trust in, and depend on? Do you live upon him, and in all distresses and straits trust in him? Can you rely on his Promises, trust in his Truth and Faithfulness? They that have large Portions of this World, live on them, 'tis what they trust and depend on, for supply on all occasions.

sions; a rich Man's Wealth, in his own conceit, is his strong City, *Prov.* 10. 15. Now if your Consciences can speak for you in these things, then is God the Rock of your Heart, and Portion for ever.

### III. *Use of Exhortation.*

I shall close this Discourse with a Use of Exhortation, and shall Address my self to the Young.

1. Should not the present Providence affect your Hearts, and lead you to consider the uncertainty of your time in this World? You have followed a young Damsel to her long Home this Evening, who, a few Days past, was as likely to live as any of you; yet Death, that spares no Age, no Sex, hath her Body under its Arrest; and it may be any of your Lot next, to be under the same fatal Stroke: your Bodies may be turn'd into the Dust, from whence you came, and your Souls summon'd to appear before the Judge of all the World, before the return of another Week or Day. You that have all things the World can afford you, and are ready to sing a *Requiem* to your selves, and with the rich Fool in the Gospel, say, *Luke* 12. 19. *Soul take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry, for thou hast much goods laid up for many years;* may see the Hand-writing against the Wall, to make your Joynts smite one against another; and God may say, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, &c.* Pray think with your  
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your selves, were you in the place and stead of the young Virgin, that you have now followed to her Grave, How would it be with your Souls? In what preparedness are you to appear before God? What have many of you been doing, but to undoe your Souls for ever? Oh! Sirs, there's nothing can secure you from the Stroke of Death for one Day's time, nor be a comfort to you in that Hour, but an Intrest in God (through Jesus Christ) as your Portion. Therefore

2. Take the best Advice, that ever was given from the best Friend, and only Savior of Souls, Matth. 6. 33. *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;* and remember your Creator in the Days of your Youth, *Eccles. 12. 1. Consider how reasonable it is, that he which made you, and is your bountiful Benefactor, should first be fought unto by you; and that since you derive from him your Penance, and the whole duration of it, 'tis but just, that what we receive from his Bounty, should be offered up to his Glory. Remember that the time of your Youth, is the time which God calls for, to be employed in his Service, to which he hath made a gracious Promise, Prov. 8. 17. *They that seek me early, shall find me.* O Labor therefore, to make it your first and chiefest Business, to give your Hearts and Souls to the Lord, in all holy Obedience; strive to enter in at the strait Gate, and labor after an early conversion to God, before Sin hath hardened your Hearts, and the Spirit of God cease to strive with you. With what comfort and confidence may those go to the Throne of Graces, who have devoted to God, the first*

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first and best of their time? And with what satisfaction may they in the Hour of Death, resign up their departing Souls into the Hands of God, who have offered to him the early Dew of their Youth,

3. Choose God for your Portion, Jesus Christ for your only Lord and Redeemer, the Holy Spirit for your Guide, the Word of God for your Rule, and make his Glory the end of your Living and Dying. Choose *Mary's* better part, which shall never be taken from you; this was the Choice of the Damsel you have now followed to her Grave, and her greatest Comfort on her dying Bed: For being asked whether she loved the Lord Jesus Christ, she answered, *Yes, he is the chiefest Good; and that with Mary, she had chosen the better part, that should never be taken away from her.* Oh! what a comfort will it be to you, when you come to lie upon a sick and dying Bed, when Death stares you in the Face, and all the World can give you no relief or comfort, to be able to say, I have chosen God for my Portion, Christ for my Lord and Redeemer, the Holy Spirit for my Guide, the Word of God for my Rule, and his Glory the great end of my Living! With what a holy Triumph will such a Soul be able to say with the Apostle, *1 Cor. 15. 55. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* Come Sirs, young Men, young Women, will you be persuaded to make this happy Choice? And to press you hereto, be pleased to consider,

(1.) What a miserable condition you are in, whilst out of Christ. (children of Wrath-by Nature, and of

of Disobedience by Practice, Heirs of Hell and Damnation; and if God take you away in your Impenitency and Unbelief, miserable for ever will your condition be. Wo, and alas! that ever you were born, better you had never known a Day, than to go out of the World without an Interest in Jesus Christ.

(2.) Consider, there is an absolute necessity of Conversion or Regeneration, or you are certainly damned; the Judge of all the World hath irreversibly pronounc'd it, Joh. 3. 3. *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* See *Matth.* 18. 3. *Luke* 13. 3. without Regeneration, there is no Salvation.

3. If you have seriously thought of these things, why may not this be the time? that there may be a blessed Marriage-union between Christ and your Souls. For the spirit and the bride say, *Come. And let him that is athirst, come; And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely,* Rev. 22. 17. Oh! what encouragement have you, young Men, and young Women; yea, all of you, to come and embrace Jesus Christ? Shall all that Christ hath done and suffered for Sinners Salvation, be always flighted by you? Shall the Antient of Days, whose Hairs are white and woolly with Eternity, come down in our assumed Nature, and become an Infant in time; and he that rear'd up the VVorld by the Blood of his Cross; Power, redeem it by the Blood of his Cross; and the blessed one be made a Curse, and make his own precious Blood a Fountain to wash poor Sin-

## *An intrest in God*

Sinners from all their Uncleanes, be any longer  
 flighred and rejected by you? Shall he stand at  
 the Door and knock, saying, *Open to me, my  
 sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled*, Cant. 5. 2.  
 And yet your Hearts be still shut against him?  
 Shall he come down by Entreaties, and with a  
 wooeing and beseeching Goodness, pray you to  
 be reconciled to God, 2 *Corinth.* 5. 19, 20. And  
 will you yet continue in open Rebellion against  
 him? and rather hearken to the foolish Delusi-  
 ons of your own evil Hearts, the Temptations of  
 Satan, and the Lipticements of a sinful VWorld,  
 than to the sweet Invitations of a dear Redem-  
 er; and choose rather the Slavery of Sin, than  
 by Christ to be made the free Denizens of Hea-  
 ven? Have you not contracted Guilt enough al-  
 ready to sink you down to Hell, unless the Lord  
 be very gracious to you? Have you not deferred  
 the VWork of God, and your Souls Salvation,  
 too long already? Pray consider, what Fruit have  
 you had in those things, whereof you have now  
 cause to be ashamed? Have not your guilty  
 Consciences, many times rebuked your carnal Con-  
 fidence, and filled you with Fears of Death and  
 Judgment? Oh! then say, the time past of  
 your Life is enough, and more than enough;  
 that you have wrought the VWill of the Flesh,  
 followed a vain VWorld, and enslaved your So-  
 dies and Souls to gratify the worst of Enemies;  
 and take the Advice the Holy Ghost gives, *Heb.*  
 3. 7. To day, whilst it is called to day, hear his  
 Voice, and not harden your Hearts. Goe home,  
 fall on your Knees, and earnestly beg of God to



reveal Jesus Christ savingly to your Souls, and to enable you with full purpose of Heart, to cleave to the Lord.

Now a Word to those, who have this Evening followed a near and dear Relation to her long Home. What shall I say to the Mother, whose Loss is great, and Grievous many? This only, I would say; Sorrow not, as one without Hope; for blessed be God, that hath given you Consolation, and Ground of Hope, concerning your Daughter: What though the Loss be yours? Is not the Gain hers? Is she not gone to a better Place, and to better Company? From a company of dying Mortals on Earth, to Jesus, whom her Soul loved. Therefore patiently submit to the Will of God, who orders all things well, and hath an absolute Right to dispose of us and ours.

And to the Children, what you saw good in your dear and deceased Sister, imitate; follow her in her Love to Jesus, and lovely Tenderness and Obedience to her Mother; and live in the Fear of God, and in Love one to

to another, and the God of Love and Peace will dwell among you. Finally, let us all Labor to make sure of God for our Portion, and entirely give up our selves to the Conduct of his Counsel here, that afterward we may be received to his Glory. That we may be able (in great Assurance) to say with the *Psalmist*, Though our Heart and Flesh fail, yet God is the strength of our Heart, and our Portion for ever.

F I N I S.



